

BACKGROUND BRIEFING ON CUBAN SITUATION

THE PENTAGON

October 22, 1962

8:00 PM (EDT)

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Perhaps to start with we should have an understanding on the way in which we will conduct the discussion. I think it would be preferable to consider it all on a background basis. If you wish an on the record press conference, one may be held tomorrow or the next day. I think tonight I can perhaps best answer your questions and give you the most useable foundation for your own reporting if this is considered and recognized as a background conference.

I asked about these cameras when I came in, since that seems to be quite out of context with a background conference, and I see some recorders over there, and I understand these are Defense Department pieces of equipment. But in any case, is it recognized that this is a background conference? Does anybody have any question in their minds about that?

QUESTION: What does that mean, the source of the information?

ANSWER: It means that the source will not be attributable to me or any individual, but may be attributed to a Defense Department spokesman.

Secondly, I could perhaps introduce this discussion by outlining a series of measures we have taken and discussing with you the outlines of our plans. Instead, I think but a very brief statement by me and the devotion of the time to your questions might serve you best. Therefore, I will follow that procedure. I will make only two or three comments.

First, the objective of the quarantine is very clear. It is the prevention of entry into Cuba of offensive weapons and it is to attain ultimately the withdrawal of the offensive weapons now located on that island.

Secondly, to accomplish this task we will hail, stop, and search vessels proceeding toward Cuba. We will divert those vessels that, upon search, are determined to be carrying offensive weapons. In the event that vessels refuse search we will use force if necessary to halt them. In the event that vessels upon being searched refuse to modify their course and move to alternative ports outside of Cuba, we will use force if necessary to accomplish that end.

During this period we will continue to conduct aerial surveillance to determine the activity related to

offensive weapons on the island.

Now, a few of the measures we have taken today may be of interest to you and may be a source of questions. I will mention them briefly.

We redeployed our air defense units in this country to better defend the eastern coast. We have reinforced Guantanamo substantially. We have ordered and now evacuated the dependents from Guantanamo. We have increased the alert status of our U. S. military forces world-wide including the alert status of the Strategic Air Command. During the course of this quarantine we will, of course, be aware of the possibility of attack on U. S. merchant ships in the sea lanes around Cuba and will have air power available to use in the event of emergencies.

Now, perhaps I can best meet your purpose by asking for your questions. I will endeavor to answer them.

QUESTION: Is there any difference between quarantine and a blockade?

ANSWER: Yes, there is a definite difference between the two. I think that rather than try to describe tonight the legal distinctions between them and answer questions that are primarily legal in character, however, I should simply say that I believe the State Department

is prepared to brief you on the legal implications of our actions and to answer questions to that end.

QUESTION: If defensive weapons are found on ships, will the ships be allowed to proceed to Cuba?

ANSWER: Yes, at least initially. Our initial prohibition will be on the importation of offensive weapons. We may expand that category of prohibited goods as time passes by.

QUESTION: About how many ships and planes do you now have in the area of the Caribbean to carry out this quarantine?

ANSWER: More than enough. We are now engaging upon potential use of force and I don't believe it would be in our interest or in the interest of the nation to answer questions as to force dispositions with the definite numbers of men, aircraft or vessels that will be included in the operation.

QUESTION: Is it your opinion that this quarantine is not legally or otherwise an act of war, and would you also be a little bit more specific on what actions you have ordered the Navy ships and/or planes to take to stop the ships?

ANSWER: Yes. Dealing with your first question first, "Is the quarantine an act of war?" No, the quarantine

would be based upon the Rio Treaty, I believe Articles 6 and 8, and is not an act of war in that sense. (1)

As I say, however, I don't wish you to consider me as providing you with the definitive legal answers tonight. This is a very complex subject. Our lawyers in Defense and State and elsewhere in the government have studied it very thoroughly, are intimately acquainted with it and I think you would be well served to obtain your answer from them and they will give it to you. (1)

Secondly, as to the actions we will take to achieve our objective in preventing the entry into Cuba of offensive weapons, we will have air patrols and sea patrols, providing information on the vessels moving in toward Cuba. And based on the location of vessels and the determination that their course indicates they are moving toward Cuba, we will move Naval units into a position to intercept them, to hail them by appropriate means, all means, as a matter of fact, to inform them that they are being asked to stop to accept search in accordance with the terms of the quarantine.

If they stop, we will send a boarding party on board, review the manifest, search the cargo. In the event that there is no indication of offensive weapons on

board the ship will proceed.

If there is an indication of offensive weapons on board, the Captain, the Master will be given the option of proceeding to any port he chooses other than a port of Cuba. If he refuses to change his course, we will use force to force him to do so. Similarly, if he refuses to stop and accept search in the first place, we would also use whatever force is required to prevent him from proceeding to Cuba.

QUESTION: Since this involves both the U. S. mainland and the Caribbean, do you propose to create any kind of new command structure for this?

ANSWER: No, no new command structure is proposed. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are, of course, my channel of command to Admiral Dennison, the Commander in Chief of the Atlantic. Admiral Anderson is acting for the Chiefs in hour to hour review of the action and the direction of the activity.

QUESTION: It wasn't entirely clear in the President's words, but are there missiles of the medium range variety already in Cuba, and do we know whether the nuclear warheads are there, too?

ANSWER: There are several questions here, all of them important, and I will try to take them one by one.

First, are there missiles of the medium range category in Cuba?

Now, perhaps to answer that I should first distinguish for you between two categories of missiles: Those that are known as MRBM's and in this case, mobile MRBM's, on the one hand, and secondly, those that are known as intermediate range ballistic missiles, on the other hand. The first category, which is the category the question was addressed to, has a range of about 1,000 nautical miles, which is, as I remember, roughly 1200 statute miles. The second category, the IRBM's intermediate range ballistic missiles, have ranges of about 2200 nautical miles, which would be increased to the equivalent number of statute miles.

Are there MRBM's in Cuba? Yes. I don't wish to leave with you, and won't leave with you, a series of photographs I have here, but I will just show you one to indicate some of the evidence. You won't be able to see from where you are sitting exactly the detail, but it will give you some idea of the situation. This is a photograph of a portion of Cuba. By the way, it became available to us, this

particular one, Monday midnight or Tuesday morning. The missiles that we are talking about are these objects here. These are launchers, here and here, aligned to a specific section of the United States. These missiles are on trailers which are moved to the launcher, backed up against the launcher.

The missile is grasped by the launcher, erected, and the trailer moves away. As you can see, there are two launchers in sight in this picture and several missiles. This, I believe, if I remember rightly, is a thirty time enlargement. You see the same missiles here on a lesser enlargement. The launchers here and here. The trucks with the fuel for the missiles. The tents for the Soviet personnel who are responsible for implanting the missiles in place. This is a mobile installation. It can be put in place in a matter of days.

As a matter of fact, this particular one was put in place in a matter of days. We have sequential photographs separated by a period of a day or two and you can see the movement of the equipment onto the site, the erection of certain buildings that are used for checking out the missiles, the installation of the tents, the movement of the convoys carrying the missiles onto the site, the scraping off of



the ground on probably pre-survey sites for the location of the missile itself. This is the MRBM missile. So the specific answer to the question is, yes, there are.

QUESTION: Can you compare that to one in our arsenal?

ANSWER: No, I don't wish to. We don't have anything exactly like that in our arsenal as a matter of fact. Let me go back. I have not answered all of these questions yet. The specific answer is there are MRBM missiles in Cuba. Those were pictures of them.

When those pictures are examined under a lens and microscope, they have a stereoptic quality that allows you to see the depth and dimensions and detail in a way that this print cannot possibly display.

Secondly, I believe the question was, are there nuclear warheads in Cuba. We don't know. Nuclear warheads are of such a size that it is extremely unlikely we would ever be able to observe them by the intelligence means open to us. I think it is almost inconceivable, however, that there would be missiles, as I have indicated, without accompanying warheads.

QUESTION: Is it possible, or are you considering

the fact that nuclear warheads could be carried by plane, and, if so, what are we prepared to do in that eventuality?

ANSWER: We are prepared to prevent the entry into Cuba of offensive weapons by whatever means they are carried.

QUESTION: Are there any aircraft in Cuba capable of being offensive weapons?

ANSWER. The question is, "Are there any aircraft in Cuba capable of being offensive weapons?" And the answer is yes. There are IL-28 aircraft there that have been introduced within the past week or ten days, as best we can tell.

QUESTION: How many?

ANSWER: We are not discussing the number of any of the offensive weapons in Cuba. The IL-28 aircraft are shown on this photograph. This is an airfield which, up until a few days ago, had barricades across the runway, indicating ineffect it had been abandoned. There were a series of crates observed on ships moving into Cuba, which, as I recall, about 10 or 14 days ago, if I remember the date correctly -- I am not absolutely positive of that at the moment -- looked as though they were of the size that might be used for transporting IL-28 aircraft.

We followed those crates. There were then a relatively small number. We followed them into this airfield. They were lined up, and you can see them here on the edge of the runway. By this time there is a larger number of them. The crates are broken open periodically, and you can see here one aircraft located right here, which came out of a crate that had been moved from here over to here, and this is an IL-28. The fuselage is crated in these crates. The wings separately. In this particular instance, the wing has been placed on the aircraft itself. So the specific answer to your question is yes.

QUESTION: Does this missile have a nuclear capability?

ANSWER: Somebody -- let us stay on the IL-28. Somebody asked how long a range.

QUESTION: Is it a long range jet?

ANSWER: The IL-28 is a medium range jet aircraft, probably on the order of seven or eight hundred miles radius of action.

QUESTION: How would the aerial embargo be effected? Do you anticipate challenging Soviet planes or any suspicious planes?

ANSWER: We will take whatever action is necessary to make it effective. We have detailed plans to accomplish that. I don't wish to go into those in any great detail tonight.

QUESTION: Do you have any idea how long the MRBM's have been in Cuba?

ANSWER: To the best of our knowledge, they have entered rather recently, and I say that because these particular installations are installations that can be set up in a matter of days, as I suggest they have been. We have observed several during the past five or six days, and these installations have, at the early part of the period, been in a very early stage of activation. In certain instances, for example, there has been nothing but one truck, or something of that kind on what we later determined was the site. And then with the passage of hours, and I mean almost literally hours -- in one particular instance, I recall two photographs that were separated by less than 24 hours -- which showed an increase of perhaps, let us say, 50 per cent in the amount of equipment. In that particular instance, that particular site has moved into an operational condition since that photograph first came to my attention which was no more than three or four days ago. So there has been a very rapid movement of

mobile MRBM's on the sites and into the process of activation. How long those have been in Cuba, I can't answer the question. They have been crated or otherwise hidden prior to the time they began to move along the roads and move out into the open.

QUESTION: You first observed them only in the last four or five days?

ANSWER: Yes. I think the first time the picture came to the attention of the President, as a matter of fact, was 9 o'clock Tuesday morning. I saw it midnight Monday night, I guess, something like that.

QUESTION: I would like to ask by what means and to what ports the dependents were evacuated from Guantanamo?

ANSWER: I believe Mr. Sylvester will discuss with you after I answer your questions the particular status of the dependents and the ports to which they are being moved, and the way in which you can inform yourselves of the story, if you care to do so.

QUESTION: Has there been any evidence of any Soviet airlifting into Cuba?

ANSWER: The question is, "Has there been any evidence of Soviet airlifting into Cuba?" The Soviet has a very limited air fleet capable of moving to Cuba. Many

of you may have noticed the flight of a commercial transport or an alleged commercial transport aircraft into Cuba within the past day or two. This is one of a handful of transport aircraft that I understand are capable of moving in there. The specific answer to your question is there has been no evidence of any significant movement of individuals or cargo into Cuba by Soviet air.

QUESTION: What about the IRBM's in Cuba?

ANSWER: The IRBM's in contrast to the MRBM's, at least in their Cuban deployment, are fixed installation missiles. There we have observed the initial preparations of certain of the sites. To the best of my knowledge none of those IREM missiles are operational at the present time. The site photographs indicate preparations are in relatively early stages and it will be a matter of weeks before activation can be expected to be completed. This contrasts with the MRBM's. The MRBM's are designed by the Soviets to set up in one location, pull down, move to another, and set up in another. This process of activation and de-activation and movement and activation can take place in a matter of days.

In contrast the IRBM's are placed in relatively permanent sites. I think I have one that is not the one I

wanted to show, but it will give you a general idea of the status of some of these.

This is a photograph of an IRBM site taken within the last three days in the very early stages. Now we have photographs of other sites that are in a somewhat later stage of development. You can see there is nothing but scars on the earth here. They have simply set in earth movers at this particular stage and begun to lay out the sites, locate the position for the bunkers, establish the runways for the cables between the bunkers and the sites. In this particular installation you can see three sites scarified on the earth, a fourth one starting down here. There will be four missile launchers there of the IRBM category at fixed locations, oriented in this instance toward the central part of the United States, with a control bunker between each, linked by cables from the control bunker to the two missiles. Similarly in the other pair.

Are they soft? Yes.

QUESTION: Are any Soviet Bloc Ships --

ANSWER: Let me get one over here.

QUESTION: The President has warned against shooting a missile at any other Latin American state ---

ANSWER: No, that is not quite what he warned. He warned against shooting a missile against any Western Hemisphere country. It is not limited to Latin American nations. To me this is an important point.

QUESTION: Are there any indications that they are going to fire missiles at any other Latin American nation besides the United States in this hemisphere?

ANSWER: We can't tell. They have mobile equipment that can be oriented in whatever direction they choose to fire.

QUESTION: I wanted to know if there are any Soviet Bloc ships on their way to Cuba now?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Do you suspect that they have the offensive weapons aboard?

ANSWER: I have no way of knowing until we search. We propose to search.

QUESTION: You said you had this during the last few days, this proof. Did you have any intelligence reports before the last few days that indicated to you that there might be installations like this there?

ANSWER: No, there have been rumors off and on. I



have noticed some of them in the press as a matter of fact. I suppose coming from refugees of a variety of types of equipment in Cuba, but we had no, what I would call, hard intelligence, until, I said Monday midnight, maybe it was ten o'clock Monday night. I don't believe the pictures I showed you, I don't believe any of them are from that particular set of photographs. These that I showed you were taken somewhat later in the week. That was the first time that we had any reason to believe that there were offensive weapons in Cuba. And at that time the President ordered a greatly increased surveillance program which has been carried on later in the week to obtain more information. The information that became available Monday evening was not definitive. It simply raised a strong suspicion that there was more than we saw in that particular instance. So we had to go back and systematically cover our areas.

As you can imagine, photo interpreters working on literally thousands of feet of film and trying to pick this kind of a situation out -- here are some more scars over here, and you try to examine the landscape of Cuba and separate this type of scar from this type of scar, it is a tremendous task. And they have been working twenty-four hours a day

since that time on this tremendous mass of material to try to sort out the probable from the improbable. And it is based on that very, very thorough analysis by literally hundreds of photo interpreters during this week that we have arrived at these conclusions. And I might say that we have satisfied ourselves personally that the conclusions that you were informed of tonight were correct.

QUESTION: What American cities were the missiles aimed at?

ANSWER: Maybe the best way to show it is to show this. Take your choice.

QUESTION: Seattle?

ANSWER: Yes, I have always like the north woods myself. This is centered on Havana. I am not indicating that there are missiles in Havana but it is a central spot on the northwestern shore of Cuba and it is therefore used for purposes of this diagram. This inner ring is at a radius of 1020 nautical miles. The outer ring is of a radius of 2200 nautical miles. The inner ring, therefore, is illustrative of the area covered by the mobile medium range ballistic missile. The outer ring is illustrative of the area covered by the intermediate ballistic missile.

You will see that the inner ring just happens to cover Washington at this point, most of Central America. The outer ring covers for all practical purposes all of the United States except a small slice of Washington and the northern part of the Pacific Coast. The other ring covers much of the northern part of South America.

QUESTION: When do you expect, knowing what you do about Soviet ships now on their way, when do you expect your first head-on?

ANSWER: I can't answer the question for several reasons. First, our ships are just moving into deployment position now. Secondly, this problem is being taken to the OAS tomorrow morning by request tonight, and a combination of the OAS action plus the movement of our ships will have some bearing ---

QUESTION: This week?

ANSWER: Oh, my, yes. It is a matter of a relatively short time, a day or two, something of that order.

QUESTION: Is there a boundary area or a line drawn where you will start the patrolling in the Atlantic?

ANSWER: No.

QUESTION: Where is that Russian ship? Is it in the Atlantic? How close to Cuba is it?

ANSWER: There a number of Russian ships moving in this territory.

QUESTION: Where are they?

QUESTION: In convoy?

ANSWER: No, not to my knowledge. There are large numbers. There are several in here at various places in the area.

QUESTION: When have you seized any ships or have you stopped any ships?

ANSWER: No.

QUESTION: When do you propose to do it, tomorrow morning?

ANSWER: In answer to this question over there, we will begin upon completion of our deployment and after discussion with the OAS tomorrow. That will be a day or two away.

QUESTION: Can any Russian ship from where it is now reach Cuba before you start stopping ships and are you going to stop all ships proceeding to Cuba? Are there any exceptions?

ANSWER: As to whether any Russian ship can reach Cuba before we impose the blockade, I can't answer the question specifically, because I don't know at the moment myself, although I suspect we have the information available as to the location of every Russian ship.

The second question, are we going to stop all ships: The answer is we are going to stop the movement into Cuba of offensive weapons, and we will stop what ever ships are necessary to attain that end. Initially we will stop ships of all nations moving into Cuba. This is not a quarantine which will be limited to the inspection of Soviet ships only.

QUESTION: Three quick questions: One, was Gromyko shown the pictures you showed us? Do we have an early warning system facing Cuba? How do you hope to remove the offensive weapons there?

ANSWER: First, as to whether Gromyko was shown the pictures. I don't think he needs to be shown the pictures. I would like to have him show me some pictures.

Secondly, do we have an early warning system? We have an air defense system along our east coast which has radars that provide warning.

The third question: How do we propose to get rid of what is there? We will use whatever action appears to be necessary to accomplish that end.

QUESTION: Does this include bombing those sites as necessary?

ANSWER: The President simply stated that we will take further action, whatever further action is required to achieve that objective.

QUESTION: Can you comment on the possibility of calling more troops?

ANSWER: Yes. We obtained from Congress, as you know, the authority to call 150,000 men from the Reserve and Guard units, and I stated at that time when we requested the authority that there were situations we could visualize in which it might be necessary to call certain selected types of personnel and, that

although the number seemed perhaps small in relation to a request for authority to call Reserve and Guards, those specialized personnel could be extremely important to us in certain types of situations. This is that kind of a situation. We don't, however, at the present have any immediate plan to call reserve personnel. We may do so if as the situation develops, it appears such personnel are required to properly carry out this action.

QUESTION: Can you tell us what kind of aircraft took the photographs?

ANSWER: They are taken by military reconnaissance aircraft.

QUESTION: In the final analysis are you prepared to sink Soviet ships?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: What kind of weapons would you consider defensive and permit into Cuba?

ANSWER: I think you could conceive that rifles, for example, in the hands of Cubans would largely be defensive. In discussing this question not long ago I pointed out that any weapon, almost literally any weapon, can be considered as either an offensive or defensive weapon. But some are more clearly aligned to one

objective or the other. And as I suggest, a rifle moving into Cuba might be considered defensive. I think the surface to air missile sites or surface to air missile equipment associated with the Air Defense is quite obviously primarily defensive in character. It seems to me that a mobile medium range ballistic missile is almost certainly, by anybody's definition, offensive. So we have issued orders to Admiral Dennison to prohibit the entry into Cuba of a selected list of weapons which are defined as offensive weapons, and the President has instructed me to modify that list as circumstances make necessary.

QUESTION: How many items are on the list?

ANSWER: All offensive weapons.

QUESTION: Could you name these Russian missiles?

Are they Golden, the T-3, Comet series?

ANSWER: No, I think it is better and less confusing for our public if we call them mobile medium range ballistic missiles and intermediate range ballistic missiles on fixed sites.

QUESTION: Are you expecting any counter move by the Russians in Berlin, a blockade there, and do you have any plans to take care of that, and if so, what?

ANSWER: I cannot speak to the possible moves the Soviets may make. As I mentioned we have alerted our forces



worldwide to a high state of readiness, and we are prepared for whatever action may be required.

QUESTION: Can you give us an order of the increase in reinforcements at Guantanamo Bay, and are they all Marines?

ANSWER: I would say it has been more than doubled in strength.

QUESTION: Are they all Marines?

ANSWER: All the reinforcements as I recall are Marines. The majority of reinforcement are certainly Marines, and I am inclined to think that almost all are Marines.

QUESTION: Congress also gave you the authority to extend enlistments?

ANSWER: Yes, enlisted and officer.

QUESTION: Do you plan any?

ANSWER: We may or we may not. I think that you might expect that were we to call reserves from inactive duty to active duty, we would at that same time, if not earlier, have extended the enlistments of men presently on active duty.

QUESTION: One other thing, sir. The Department of Defense recently put out a notice saying that persons who were to end their service near the Christmas season will be let out early. Are you rescinding that?

ANSWER: I can't answer the question.

QUESTION: Are you prohibiting civil air transport from going to Cuba?

ANSWER: No, we are not prohibiting any air transport from going to Cuba. We are simply quarantining the entry into Cuba of offensive weapons by what ever means they are transported.

QUESTION: This clearly is unilateral action. What could the OAS do if they disapproved of something like that? What are the possibilities?

ANSWER: This action is proposed under Articles 6 and 8, as I recall it, of the Rio Treaty, and in that sense it is not unilateral action.

QUESTION: Within the last two or three days the Defense Department was asked specifically about the presence of IL-28's and moderate range missiles in Cuba and on each occasion there were firm and unequivocal denials. Why is there deception?

ANSWER: I don't know that there was deception. I would have to go back and check the hour of the question and the photographs.

QUESTION: Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

ANSWER: I can't answer. I would have to go back and get the questions and look at the photographs. These photographs have been changing almost literally by the hour. The final definitive briefing of the President on this took place at 2:30 Sunday afternoon, and it was not until that particular hour that those who are responsible, principally, of course, our intelligence activities throughout the government, were prepared to make a definitive statement on what was there, where it was, and in what quantity.

QUESTION: Is it our stated policy to compel the withdrawal of these installations that are now in Cuba?

ANSWER: The President stated it was our objective to obtain the withdrawal or elimination of the offensive weapons now in Cuba.

QUESTION: Are dependents being withdrawn from any other section of the Caribbean?

ANSWER: No, not at this time.

QUESTION: Will they be?

ANSWER: Not at this time. I can't speak for the future.

QUESTION: Have all the dependents left Cuba?

ANSWER: Let me answer this since it is on the same subject. To the best of my knowledge, yes.

QUESTION: By plane?

ANSWER: No, most of the dependents moved out by sea. Certain of the litter cases moved by air.

QUESTION: How far from the Cuban shore will this quarantine line be established?

ANSWER: Whatever point is necessary to obtain efficient quarantine.

QUESTION: Do you envision intercepting out in the mid-Atlantic?

ANSWER: The intercepts will, of course, be in part by air where the planes locate Soviet ships, and/or other ships moving in toward Cuba, and will check their course to determine whether there is reason to think they are definitely going to Cuba. They will radio that information back to central control points and naval vessels will be placed in position to intercept ships.

QUESTION: How do you intercept an airplane? What do you do? It lands?

ANSWER: We will simply take whatever action is necessary to prevent the entry of offensive weapons.

QUESTION: How do you know where it is going?

ANSWER: This will be discussed in some briefing later this week, perhaps.

QUESTION: As to airplanes, the President says on

page 3 of his statement that quarantine will be extended, if needed, to other types of cargo and carriers after saying that ships will be stopped. Are you saying that you will be quarantining against airlift?

ANSWER: I am saying that we will act to prevent the entry of offensive weapons into Cuba by whatever means those weapons move. The question of air is really academic. I don't want to give you the exact figures on the Soviet transport aircraft because I am not entirely certain I have them exactly in mind. My recollection is that they have only a handful of aircraft. I think it is six, as a matter of fact, of the transport aircraft of the particular type that might be used for that purpose. So the possibility of movement in by air are not very great, but they are not possibilities we have overlooked, and we are prepared to meet that situation should it arise.

QUESTION: Do we have any intelligence information on the possibility of Soviet submarine bases.

ANSWER: We have no information that there are Soviet submarine bases on the Island of Cuba. However, since you mention the point, there are bases of KOMAR class patrol boats on the Island of Cuba.

QUESTION: What class?

ANSWER: KOMAR. To the best of our knowledge these are not Soviet boats at the present time, although they were undoubtedly supplied to Cuba by the Soviet Union. They are presumably Cuban craft. But they are patrol boats, high speed, missile equipped, PT boats, obviously designed to interdict shipping.

QUESTION: Could you describe the stage of the SAC alert, and could you say if the U.S. garrison in Berlin is included in the general role you described for U.S. troops all over the world?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: And the first part?

ANSWER: The U. S. troops are included in the state of alert.

QUESTION: The stage of the SAC alert?

ANSWER: Oh, the SAC alert. I would rather not describe in detail other than to say that we recognize the possibility of a series of moves in response to the actions we have taken and we have taken account of those moves and placed SAC in the appropriate state of alert.

QUESTION: Can you tell us anything about the numbers of either type of missiles?

ANSWER: No, I know that is a question of great interest to you. We considered whether the information should

be made available. But in view of what it might disclose as to our sources of information, or the accuracy of those sources, or the extent of them, it seemed unwise to make that information available. Therefore, we are withholding it.

QUESTION: On the question of the denial that there was an offensive capability in Cuba, I find it difficult to understand how, if you have known since Tuesday that there was reason to suspect that this offensive capability had been acquired, how the Department could then deny flatly it had.

ANSWER: I don't want to get into the question of the denial. I have to go back and look at it. If you wish to we will be happy to have the record searched. I want to make it perfectly clear that the definitive briefing of the President on this subject didn't take place until 2:30 Sunday afternoon. I don't believe we do a service to the public when we speak on partial or incomplete information. It was not until mid-Sunday that we had complete information. We have had a very fast moving picture all week long. Areas of Cuba that we examined earlier in the week, and concluded had no offensive missiles located in them, we re-examined later in the week, based on the information that became

available Saturday, and concluded throughout the hours of Sunday morning that there were installations. These were detected when the pattern, the distances between certain specified objects appeared over and over again. You must recognize that this is a difficult job. Weather, clouds, the angle of the sun, the most amazing atmospheric effects complicate the photo-interpretation job; and when it is being done night and day and on such an accelerated basis as this, I think you should understand we cannot speak definitively at every point in the process.

QUESTION: When were some of the units put on alert? What was the first time any of the units were alerted because of this situation?

ANSWER: I find that hard to answer. Frankly we have been increasing the number of units on alert over the past forty-eight hours, probably.

QUESTION: Is STRICOM included?

ANSWER: All U. S. military units worldwide have been alerted to the need for a high state of readiness. We have a whole series of alert postures as many of you know. When I am saying put on alert, that doesn't mean alert for movement. It means alert for advance to a higher state of readiness and alert to the possibility of a series of



alternative responses to the actions we are taking.

QUESTION: Have the Cubans tried to knock down any of our recon aircraft and do you anticipate they might?

ANSWER: They have not knocked down any.

QUESTION: Have they tried?

ANSWER: I would rather not answer that question but I think you must assume that as we move into this series of actions we will face losses. We can't undertake this kind of operation without it.

QUESTION: If they were to launch a missile from one of these sites now, how much warning would we have and do we have the means to intercept one?

ANSWER: We do not have the means to intercept this type of missile. The amount of warning would vary depending on the type of missile and a number of other conditions. It would not be long in any case.

QUESTION: There were reports that several helicopter manufacturers had been alerted. Could you comment on that, and were also other companies?

ANSWER: It sounds like a self-serving report to me. I don't know of any alerting of helicopter manufacturers.

QUESTION: Will newsmen be permitted to observe any of the search or intercept procedures?

ANSWER: I think that is a good question. I would like to ask Arthur to answer that. He is prepared to do so later when he discusses the evacuation and some of the other press procedures with you.

QUESTION: How do we respond to the claim that the Soviets are doing in Cuba no more than what we have done in their perimeter, therefore we should trade with them?

ANSWER: There is a very, very basic difference between these two situations. When you say they are doing no more than we have done on their perimeter, it was the Soviet threat to Western Europe, including its flanks of the Scandinavian countries on the north and the Greek and Turkish nations on the south, that led to our support of Western Europe and to our arming the Turks and the Italians with certain nuclear weapons. There is no similarity between the provision of such weapons to nations under the threat of attack, and the clear threat of attack, and the stated threat of attack by the Soviet Union. There is no similarity between arming of nations under that threat, on the one hand, versus the arming of Cuba on the other, which obviously was not under the threat of nuclear attack or attack from this country.

QUESTION: Can you discuss the two or three isolated instances -- this summer, I think they were, in which

Canadian pilots and navigators gave courtesy escort to Russian planes on the way to Cuba?

ANSWER: I can't. I am not really familiar enough to discuss that point.

QUESTION: This mobile missile that they now have, does this thing have an atomic capability?

(more)

ANSWER: The question is, does the mobile medium range ballistic missile have an atomic capability. It is inconceivable to me that it would be used with any other type of warhead. The photographs I showed you were the typical missile exclusive of the warhead.

Normally the warhead would be mated at the last moment as the missile was put on the launcher, and erected into position. Those particular photographs do not show the warhead. As I stated earlier, we have not detected the location of the warheads. I think it is fair to say we may never, by the means of intelligence open to us, but it is absolutely inconceivable to those of us who have worked on the problem and have been exposed to it that this equipment, in this state of readiness, a high state of operational capability, would have been placed in Cuba without warheads close to the missiles themselves.

QUESTION: How long have you been photographing Cuba, and did you run down the previous rumors or reports that you received of military buildup in Cuba, military installations?

ANSWER: You may remember that the Organization of American States urged the maintenance of a close surveillance

on Cuba, and we have been maintaining such a surveillance. We run down every report that seems to have any merit whatsoever. We have received literally tens of thousands of such reports. We sort them out, and those that appear to have merit, we do everything possible to investigate fully.

QUESTION: Could you discuss, sir, the missile on the KOMAR type patrol boats and what their capabilities are?

ANSWER: Yes. They are a ship directed missile, short range, not of the type that you would expect to launch against a land target under anything but the most extreme circumstances, and probably equipped with conventional, that is to say non-nuclear warheads. They are quite clearly a coastal defense type of craft.

QUESTION: What would be our response in the event that in the Security Council the Soviets should suggest that they will remove what they put there if we move out of some of our military bases?

ANSWER: This is really a question I think should be addressed to the State Department. I don't want to evade it, but I think you would get a far more definitive answer and a more appropriate response there.

QUESTION: Just to make sure I understood you, you said we do not have the means to intercept this kind of missile?

ANSWER: I am speaking now of the medium range ballistic missile, presumably equipped, almost certainly equipped, with a nuclear warhead and the intermediate range ballistic missile.

In other words, the missiles with ranges of 1000 nautical miles and 2200 nautical miles. These are missiles that operate at speeds somewhat less than, but similar to ICMB's and neither Soviet Union nor we have operating anti-intercontinental or intermediate range ballistic missiles systems.

QUESTION: My question follows his a little. If we do not have a way of intercepting, and if we have reason that they might possibly launch one, I wonder what arrangements are made here to protect the --

ANSWER: No, I don't believe so. That is not the problem at the minute in this kind of situation. The problem here is obtaining highly skilled selected personnel capable of operating the intricate systems we are using for this kind of operation.

QUESTION: What happens if the Cubans use one of their defensive missiles to strike at some of our quarantine vessels? Will we consider a hit by a Cuban ship to be an act of war?

ANSWER: We will consider an attack by Cuban aircraft and/or ship against our aircraft or vessels warrants attack by us if the Cuban ship or aircraft.

QUESTION: Will we consider it an attack if a conventional warhead ---

ANSWER: I am sorry.

QUESTION: The President said that if the Cubans shot off a nuclear warhead, we could retaliate.

ANSWER: I think the two are in such entirely different categories that they warrant different treatment. An attack by a Cuban aircraft on one of our aircraft or on one of our ships warrants, I think, fire in return, directed at destroying that particular aircraft or ship. But the launch of a nuclear warhead from the surface of Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere will be interpreted as the launch of a warhead from the Soviet Union, and we will respond accordingly. I don't think there should be any confusion on that. I think we do confuse it if we begin to try to say what do you do against Cuba or Russia if they shoot a gun at you. The problem is of an entirely different magnitude.

QUESTION: When you say our stated policy is for the ultimate withdrawal of these offensive weapons, don't



you put Cuba under the threat of U. S. attack?

QUESTION: You were talking about this Turkish-Italian thing?

ANSWER: The policy is the withdrawal of offensive weapons placed there when no threat warranted that, and that is the great difference between this situation, and the provision of U. S. weapons to Turkey and Italy.

QUESTION: But still isn't Cuba under the threat of U. S. attack?

ANSWER: It is now if they launch those nuclear warheads.

QUESTION: Are these missiles and airplanes manned by Russians or by Cubans?

ANSWER: That is a good question. We have every reason to believe, and it is difficult to detect a Cuban from a Russian at the altitude we have been taking some of these pictures. But we have every reason to believe that these sites are being constructed by Russians, and that the surface to air missile systems are being manned and operated by Russians, because they are highly technical, and because they have just been installed and there has not been time to train the Cubans in their operation. It seems very clear that there are several thousand Russians on the island now performing military functions.

QUESTION: I would like to follow up this question. Aren't we really saying to the Cubans, "Get rid of those offensive missiles or we will attack you"?

ANSWER: I didn't say that, and I don't believe the President said that.

QUESTION: Could you clarify that?

ANSWER: The President said we will take further action if necessary to assure the withdrawal of the weapons from Cuba.

QUESTION: Could you say if the Russian IL-28 bombers are supersonic or subsonic?

ANSWER: They are subsonic. They are not modern aircraft in the sense that the B-58 is, for example. If I remember rightly, these IL-28's were first produced in the early 1950's, and in that sense, I might say just to digress a moment, they differ very substantially from several of the other types of weapons provided by the Soviet to Cuba. We have detected the latest type of Soviet weapons among those provided to Cuba. For example, the MRBM's and IRBM's have not been provided to any satellite country heretofore. The surface-to-air missile systems are the latest systems that the Soviets are using in their own country. There are other weapons that are among the most modern that the

Soviet Union possesses. We were quite surprised in observing that. I mention it only because this IL-28 is not a supersonic aircraft. It is not a modern aircraft of the type of the B-58. In that sense it is a contradiction to the standard that they have applied in some of their other areas.

QUESTION: For those of us mainly foreign correspondents, I guess, who are on the edge of deadline, would you agree to a break now?

ANSWER: I think maybe a break for all of us would be appropriate here. It is nine o'clock, roughly an hour after we started. I understand your interest, and I would like to be able to stay to answer all of your questions, but Mr. Sylvester will stay here for response to the questions that you asked.